

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 117, please delete the last paragraph, which begins with “Returning to Fig. 3” and which ends on page 118, and replace it with the following new paragraph:

(New) Returning to Fig. 3, which illustrates the exchange node architecture, retail engines 38 include a load search engine 42 that permits an exchange user to search loads using criteria specified in the load search request screens (Figs. 4D-4H) or man-machine graphical user interface 32 as it is called in Fig. 3. Retail engines 38 further includes a trading engine 44, whose function is described below, and a price search engine 46, which allows, in a manner described in greater detail below, the exchange users to analyze retail trades. Similarly, the optimization engines 40 include a load search engine 48, which allows ESPs to search ESP loads using criteria specified in load search screens (Figs. 4K-4M), a trading engine 50, and a price search engine 52, which allows ESPs to analyze optimization trades. In each local facility 20, the exchange node is connected via a bus 54, a data base interface 56, and a second data bus to the exchange database 58.